

THE WIND CHAMBER ENSEMBLE – MUSIC TO GROW ON!

**By
Rodney Winther
Professor Emeritus of Music
Director of Wind Studies (retired)
College-Conservatory of Music
University of Cincinnati**

Wind Chamber Ensemble music has been a passion of mine for my whole musical life. It began as a young high school bassoonist playing in a woodwind quintet for the first time and experiencing the quintet repertoire of Hindemith, Beethoven, Mozart, Danzi, Reicha and so many others. It continued on at every teaching position I held, and culminated CCM, where I conducted two full-time wind chamber ensembles. These two groups – Chamber Players and Chamber Winds – literally changed my musical life. During those fourteen years, I conducted over 250 concerts with these ensembles, toured to Ireland and Venezuela, performed at two WASBE conferences and the National CBDNA convention. My book – *An Annotated Guide to Wind Chamber Music* – has become the standard reference source for this area, and I am in the process of writing two more books on this subject. **This is all to say that if this type of music can change my life, it can change yours as well!**

As with all things related to the wind band curriculum, the first thing that you must do is to convince yourself that this repertoire is absolutely necessary for both you and your student musicians. Once you have done that, then the next step is to carefully analyze your situation, determine what the problems might be with incorporating this music into your ensemble repertoire, and then go about figuring out how to solve each of the problems.

STEP ONE: Develop a rationale for including the wind chamber ensemble in your band curriculum... It is a widely accepted fact that chamber music is the best way to teach many of the ensemble skills required for student musicians to improve their playing/ensemble skills. Whether it be a classical octet performing the wind serenades of Mozart and Beethoven, or a brass ensemble performing the antiphonal music of Gabrieli – this music will improve your ensemble's intonation and balance, while at the same time giving your musicians a sense of solo playing rarely found in large band music.

STEP TWO: Determine the instrumentation needed to perform this repertoire... The classical wind octet consists primarily of two oboes, two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons. Many typical high school ensembles lack the necessary double reeds and/or horns to fill out this instrumentation. But you can substitute virtually any instrument as needed:

- First oboe – use a flute or soprano saxophone
- Second oboe – use a clarinet
- First bassoon – use a bass clarinet or euphonium

Second bassoon – use a bass clarinet, tenor saxophone or euphonium

First horn – use an alto saxophone

Second horn – use an alto saxophone

Remember...it is better to expose your students to this wonderful repertoire using substitute instruments than not performing it at all!

STEP THREE: Find a time for the group to meet......this can be accomplished much the same way that one finds time for a jazz band/combo to meet – either before or after school, or if you have more than one rehearsal space, just extract those players from the full ensemble. This may be the most critical step in organizing your ensemble, but the effort will definitely be worth it...

STEP FOUR: Determine what repertoire will meet the needs of your ensemble...

This is the most important step, and in many ways the most enjoyable. You and your ensemble can explore the music of composers that you would not normally have the opportunity to perform, except through big band transcriptions. Here are some suggestions of repertoire that you might consider beginning with:

COMPOSER	TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION
Beethoven, Ludwig van	<i>Octet</i>	0222-2000
Beethoven	<i>Rondino</i>	0222-2000
Bernard, Emile	<i>Divertissement in F</i>	2222-2000
Bird, Arthur	<i>Serenade, Op. 40</i>	2222-2000
Bird, Arthur	<i>Suite in D</i>	2222-2000
Casadesus, Francois	<i>London Sketches</i>	2222-2000
Dubois, Theodore C.F.	<i>Au Jardin</i>	2121-1000
Dvorak, Antonin/Sheen	<i>Czech Suite</i>	2222-2000
Dvorak, Antonin/Clements	<i>Slavonic Dance, Op. 46/2</i>	1222-2000,db
Francaix, Jean	<i>Nine Pieces Caracteristiques</i>	2222-2000
Gounod, Charles	<i>Petite Symphonie</i>	2222-2000
Hummel, Johann Nepomuk	<i>Octet in E flat</i>	0222-2000
Jacob, Gordon	<i>Old Wine in New Bottles</i>	2222-2200
Jacob, Gordon	<i>More Old Wine in New Bottles</i>	2222-2200
Mendelssohn, Felix	<i>Notturmo in C, Op. 24</i>	1222-2100,db
Mozart, W.A.	<i>Serenade No. 11 in E flat</i>	0222-2000
Mozart, W.A.	<i>Serenade No. 12 in C minor</i>	0222-2000
Mozart, W.A.	<i>Serenade No. 10 in B flat</i>	0242-4000
	(multi-movements to mix and match)	
Persichetti, Vincent	<i>Serenade No. 1, Op. 1</i>	1111-2211
Pierne, Gabriel	<i>Preludio & Fughetta</i>	2112-1000
Raff, Joachim	<i>Sinfonietta in F, Op. 188</i>	2222-2000
Rossini, G./Sedlak	<i>Italian in Algiers</i>	0222-2000
Rossini, G./Sedlak	<i>Barber of Seville</i>	0222-2000
Schubert, F/V. Reynolds	<i>Little Symphony for Winds</i>	2222-2000
Strauss, Richard	<i>Serenade in B flat, Op. 7</i>	2222-4000,db
Strauss, Richard	<i>Suite in B flat, Op. 4</i>	2222-4000,db